

agreements have for our nation and our security. However, the costs borne by our local governments for providing social services to Compact migrants are unsustainable, and Congress must act to provide relief for affected jurisdictions who have spent millions of local funds to support the Compacts and migrants. COFA migrants make positive contributions to our communities, but insufficient support from the federal government causes a significant socioeconomic strain on our island communities.

This strain only increases, especially in the face of uncertain economic conditions in the Freely Associated States as well as the impact climate change is having on Pacific island nations. The bill I am introducing, as well as proposals that I have made in the past, will provide relief and empower local jurisdictions with solutions to reduce the burden of Compacts.

The best solution to Compact impact would be an increase in annual mandatory funding from the current \$30 million, divided among each of the affected jurisdictions, to the \$185 million recommended by the GAO. However, the current budget environment makes appropriating this difficult. Nonetheless I am proud to be a cosponsor of a bill introduced by Congressman TAKAI of Hawaii that would increase this annual appropriation, and I hope that we can at least have a debate on this measure.

However, as we work to find long-term solutions to Compact-impact, I believe that there are important fixes we can make that will provide much needed relief to our local governments without significant costs to taxpayers. The ideas that I incorporate into this bill are based on ways to reduce the burden with the in-kind contributions that our local governments have provided to support COFA migrants. This approach is a more budget-friendly way to address this daunting policy challenge. The bill's provisions address four areas where we can reduce the burden.

Firstly, my bill would permit the affected jurisdictions to use the cumulative amount that they have spent to provide social services to COFA migrants, towards the non-federal portion of providing Medicaid to their local residents. The bill proposes a new formula that would increase the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage for each of the affected jurisdictions. This would go a long way towards alleviating the burden on affected jurisdictions by increasing the percentage assistance provided by the federal government for Medicaid.

Secondly, the bill would categorize elementary and secondary education-aged COFA students as federally connected students and make them eligible for Impact Aid. I understand the fiscal challenges that the Impact Aid community faces, and I am committed to working with them to address the effect this bill may have on them. The bill attempts to offset this effect by increasing funding authorization and ensures that we are not taking from one group to pay for another.

Thirdly, this legislation would clarify Congress's intent when we extended eligibility for housing assistance programs to COFA migrants. This bill ensures that U.S. citizens, nationals, or lawful permanent residents are not displaced when applying for housing benefits and that they are given priority when applying for these benefits.

Lastly, this bill would commission independent research on the viability of the current Compacts, and make recommendations on

policy alternatives moving forward. I hope this research will provide strategic guidance as we move towards renewal of the Compacts in 2023 and ensure that we are administering these agreements in the best way moving forward.

I am pleased to count my colleague Mr. TAKAI from Hawaii as an original cosponsor. As this Congress discusses solutions for the crisis in Puerto Rico, it is important that we also discuss challenges that the other territories face, especially the challenge of supporting the Compacts of Free Association. While the challenges facing affected jurisdictions are nowhere near as serious as Puerto Rico, doing nothing would only welcome economic and security challenges down the road. I look forward to this bill becoming law and being a tremendous help to jurisdictions affected by Compact impact.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN C. CARNEY, JR.

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to clarify that on January 11, 2016 I was unable to vote on roll call votes 34 and 35 because I was attending to congressional business in my district.

On Roll Call Vote Number 34, on passage of H.R. 598, I did not vote. It was my intention to vote "Aye."

On Roll Call Vote Number 35, on passage of H.R. 3231, I did not vote. It was my intention to vote "Aye."

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$18,888,640,000,429.69. We've added \$8,261,762,951,516.61 to our debt in 7 years. This is over \$8 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

RECOGNIZING STAFF SERGEANT JOSEPH LEMM

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the service and sacrifice of my constituent, New York Police Department (NYPD) Detective and Staff Sergeant Joseph Lemm of West Harrison. A 15-year veteran of the NYPD and member of the Air National Guard, Staff Sergeant Lemm was killed alongside five other Americans in Afghanistan on December 21, 2015.

Staff Sergeant Lemm was a true patriot who dedicated his life to protecting others. To quote New York City Police Commissioner William Bratton, "he chose selflessness; he chose sacrifice; he chose to serve."

Staff Sergeant Lemm is survived by his wife, Christine, and two children, Brooke and Ryan. Tonight, Christine will accompany me to President Obama's final State of the Union Address. I urge my colleagues to honor her sacrifice and remember that each service member who loses his or her life leaves behind a circle of loved ones to whom we are also indebted.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Staff Sergeant Lemm's exceptional service to our country. We offer his family, friends, and community our heartfelt sympathy and will work to ensure that the loss of Staff Sergeant Lemm will serve as a reminder of the heroic sacrifices of our service members. I offer my deepest condolences to Christine, Brooke and Ryan on the passing of their husband and father, and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Staff Sergeant Lemm's service and sacrifice.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GARRET GRAVES

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, on roll call nos. 34–35, my absence was attributable to numerous parish, legislative and state-wide inauguration ceremonies in Louisiana. In addition, I met with emergency response officials related to flood waters in the Atchafalaya River system. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

On Roll Call Number 34: H.R. 598, Taxpayer Right to Know Act—yea.

On Roll Call Number 35: H.R. 3231, Federal Intern Protection Act of 2015—yea.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I was not able to be present for the following Roll Call votes on January 11, 2016 and would like to reflect that I would have voted as follows:

Roll Call Number 34: YES

Roll Call Number 35: YES

TRIBUTE TO KATHY A. HOLTZMAN

HON. KEITH J. ROTHFUS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 12, 2016

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate from time to time we take the opportunity to recognize contributions that everyday citizens have made to our community and our nation. It is in that spirit that today we remember Kathy A. Holtzman of Richland Township, Cambria County, Pennsylvania.

Kathy served her community, her church, and her family with dedication and joy. When